

February 16, 2017

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To Rep. Walker, Sen. Osten, Sen. Formica, and members of the Committee:

Re: International Festival of Arts and Ideas

I am writing to encourage you to continue your support of the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is a global association of 500 arts management leaders from 56 countries, who come together with the shared goal of strengthening and developing the arts internationally. We achieve this by building leadership ability, by recognizing and discussing field-wide trends and new developments, and by deepening global exchange through the arts.

The International Festival of Arts and Ideas (IFAI) has been a valued member for the last 11 years and it is no exaggeration to say that it has become recognized and valued international presenter. In fact, the Festival's reputation and prominence in the world contributed to the election of Mary Lou Aleskie as ISPA's Board Chair in 2016. There are no other significant presenters or festivals in the region who have the capability of presenting artists on the same scale. Indeed, IFIA has presented literally thousands of artists from around the world and throughout the United States.

However, IFAI has become much more than presenter. It is rooted in and builds a sense of community. New Haven is a challenging region with many disparities. Economic, educational and cultural differences separate neighborhoods. However, IFAI brings those communities together and not just for the ten days it runs but throughout the year.

I'd like to share a personal story. Two years ago I was at the Festival waiting in the lobby to see a performance by Carmen de Lavallade. All of a sudden the street door flew open and a young man came in to the lobby shouting racial slurs. Everyone in that lobby, black and white, young and old, responded with the response that he did not belong in this community and indeed this country. Following the incredible performance the audience came together, united, as I have never experienced – that is what the arts and IFAI do.

IFAI is also a festival of ideas. People come together to learn and speak about the images and stories they see on stage and on the streets. While not unique, few festivals in the world bring together these two forms and program in such a complimentary and constructive way. New Haven, Connecticut and indeed the world will be much poorer without the International Festival of Arts and Ideas.

I sincerely hope you'll continue your support of one of the world's great festivals.

Sincerely,



David Baile
Chief Executive Officer